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[http://www.lakenheath.af.mil/
current/jet48.htm](http://www.lakenheath.af.mil/current/jet48.htm)

Ticking packages put stop to mail delivery

By CMSgt. Linda L. Keel
Regional Postal Manager

It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon and postal personnel at the United Kingdom Aerial Mail Terminal at RAF Alconbury were busy processing your mail. As they were loading packages onto the mail truck going to Heathrow International Airport, they heard a ticking sound from a package.

In the postal world, a ticking package starts a chain of events aimed at saving lives and property. The Aerial Mail Terminal NCOIC, following "possible bomb-in-the-mail" procedures, called the security forces and evacuated and secured the building. Security forces examined the package and then called in the explosives ordinance demolition team from RAF Lakenheath. X-rays revealed batteries and a small electronic device. Since they could not identify the device and the customs tag simply said "clothes and toys," the installation commander gave permission for EOD to destroy the package under a controlled explosion.

The explosion was small. That Monday, we returned the remains to the sender.

The above may sound like an exercise scenario – it's not! Failure to follow correct mailing procedures can be dangerous to personnel and property, and a waste of resources.

Eight postal personnel had to work five hours overtime to make up the five hours lost until the security forces declared the area safe.

Processing of all outbound U.S. mail from the United Kingdom was delayed five hours; some may not have met the cutoff times to meet flights, causing a 24-hour mail

movement delay.

For some postal patrons, a 24-hour delay may mean they now have to pay an overcharge on a bill.

The U.S. government has to pay a demurrage fee for holding the contracted truck that transports our mail to Heathrow.

We tied up five security forces members and three Ministry of Defense police officers, and they weren't available to attend to an alarm malfunction. Also, the desk sergeant was tied up with making notifications and coordinating efforts.

The EOD team has to come out on Sunday afternoon, making the two-hour round trip from Lakenheath to Alconbury.

The person who sent the package spent \$10.55 in postage for a package that shouldn't have been mailed. He will not be reimbursed.

How can you prevent this?

If you're in doubt on what's mailable, call your local post office for information.

Do not mail articles with batteries installed.

Laws governing domestic and international mail require you to fully describe the contents on customs forms. Take the time to adequately fill them out.

USAF 50th Anniversary Fact:



The 2nd Bombardment Group arrived at RAF Lakenheath Aug. 6-13, 1948. At this time, there were 443 Royal Air Force and 781 U.S. Air Force personnel assigned to the base.

Action lines

The Action Line is your direct link to me for complaints, suggestions, or comments. It's not intended to replace the chain of command. When normal command and agency channels haven't been able to resolve your concerns, call (Ext. 2324), fax (Ext. 5367), e-mail (Action_Line), send through distribution (48FW/PA), mail (48 FW/PA, Unit 5210 Box 215 APO AE 09464-0215), or hand carry your Action Line to the public affairs office (Bldg. 1085). You may remain anonymous; to receive a reply, leave your name, unit, duty or home phone number, and full APO mailing address. Names are confidential.



Michael McGinty
48th Fighter Wing
commander

Spreading the word

I wanted to thank you and your staff for a most enjoyable visit to Lakenheath. I particularly enjoyed meeting with all of your folks in the Family Support Center. They are doing great work and I'm really proud of each and every one of them. I also enjoyed meeting with your commanders to discuss personnel issues. I hope you find the information helpful and will help me to spread the word. Again – to you and your great folks at Lakenheath – many thanks.

Lt. Gen. Michael McGinty
Deputy chief of staff, personnel